606 instruct her to be a good wife; while a stepmother is assumed to have no such desire, and is likely to tell her stepdaughter not to"make so much fuss"over her husband. If the latter were to follow such advice, she would soon be criticized by her husband's parents whose residential hamlet she usually shares. Stepmothers are very common due to the frequency of divorce and the shorter lifespan of women.

606 628 Affinal relatives are expected to come to a person's aid if he becomes involved in a blood feud, particularly if his consanguinal kin are few or weak. Since there is no pattern of individual dwelling, even distant kin become involved readily, as a point of honor.

591 Residence of male persons is usually patrilocal-patrilineal, i.e. in the consanguinal line. But if a young bridegroom finds that his own father has little good land to allocate him in his parental hamlet upon his marriage, he may elect to seek better facilities by establishing residence at the bride's patrilocal hamlet. She is usuallyv very happy about this latter residence, for her kin will protect her even if she wrongs her husband (e.g. by taking a lover in subsequent years). Conversely, thehusband tries to avoid such a situation, for reasons of happiness as well as prestige.

C. Artificial Kinship.

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In view of the emphasis of seeking security in the kinship relation, it is not surprising that Amhara society has formalized several ways of establishing artificial kinship, a process called "zämäd hona".

Adoption is permitted, regulated, mediated, and even encouraged by the church, provided the person or child to be adopted is both Abyssinian Christian, and "ättentam" (lit. of good bones; ie. not a negroid Shanqalla or some other foreign race).

There are two degrees of adoption: "breast-parenthood",the complete adoption; and "bread-parenthood" by step-parents.

Full adoption provides a "breast-father" (yätut abbat ), ar a "breast-mother" ("yätut ennat"), or both. In the traditional, provincial, public ceremony of adoption, this expression was literally enacted. In the presence of the elders of the kin group, the Confessor, and the čheqa shum, the new parent (male or female) coated his or her nipples with honey and simulated breast-feeding, even if the child was already in adolescence. The adoptee was then referred to as "yätut lej" (lit. breast child). At the ceremony the new parents swear to make no distinction in treatment between the adopted and the consanguinal children; and the adoptee, if old enough "for reason" (about ages 7 to ten and over), swears to obey his new parents, tend them in sickness, and bury them as would a son.

Reasons forthe adoption of a "breast-child" may

608 be the "mother's" barrenness, or a man's wish to be
597 taken care of in his old age, or both. Obversely, an adolescent orphan may himself take the initiative in selecting a prospective breast-parent, attaching himself to him, ingratiating himself with gifts of honey, etc. After adoption, the "breast-child" is literally considered like a blood relative, and may not marry his new "sibling" -by-adoption.

This prohibition does not apply to the "bread-parent" relation. A bread-father ("anjara abbat"), and bread-mother ("enjara ennat") are considered not truly "artificial kinship" of permanence. It is a step-parent relationship, arising out of divorce and remarriage of parents, or a man's last will asking a close friend tottake care of his children, in war or famine, or sickness. Youngsters do not often take the initiative to establish this relationship, for it does not usually provide the security of the breast-parent-hood. The proverb says:

[539] "Bread-mother, what will move you?
(you are tough) like a gut!".

608 Another, mild, form of artificial kinship is established to give security and guarantee against ill-treatment to the bride, in the persons of the "mizē", two kinsmen of the groom who take an oath to regard and protect her like a sister in her new residential hamlet.

In the broadest sense, kinfolk also includes the retainer, usually a landless peasant, who has pla-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5



1. The Beginning of Life.

842 A. The Desire for Children: adoption.

Children are greatly desired by the Amhara, and a childless home is regarded as under a heavenly curse. Children are regarded as continuing the "byet", the residential extended family; as a source of riches from childhood on when they begin economic tasks; as a source of comfort and security in old age; as defenders in feuds and wars; even after the death of parents, children help them into heaven by means of "tïzkar".

588 When a woman is barren, and amulets have proven no cure for her, she may give her husband a concubine, "ïsrïd" (lit. servant maid), so that he will not feel deprived of fatherhood and begin

597 to hate her. Or she may adopt a child, preferably an orphan of kinfolk or a well-known family, by taking the child to the confessor-priest and swearing the oath of ecclesiastical adoption, whereupon the child becomes "ïgal kidan lej" (lit. contract-child). This may include the ceremony of "breast-mother", "ïtut ennat", previously described. Less fortunate is the foster child, not formally adopted, who lives with the foster parents, guards the crops and herds the cows, but is more completely dependent on the good will of the "bread mother", "enïara ennat".

593 Fathers, whether natural or adopted, expect complete obedience from their children, particularly after they have arrived at the "age of reason". Fathers feel defensively obliged to maintain their authority; as the proverbs say of a father addressing the

593 son:

539 "Sheep! If I do not eat you, you would devour me", said the hyena". (meaning: perhaps you'd

582 his late 'teens. The difference in what is considered "suitable age" is thus five or more years, for the girl may be as young as 13 or 14 in the still prevailing (though officially now outlawed) tradition. The reason is not only the earlier maturing of the girl, but partly the emphasis of protecting her virginity until marriage, partly the attitude that the groom must "tame" his bride - and the younger the better.

597 608 Consanguinal ties continue stronger, after marriage, than conjugal ties. The "artificial kinship" created at this period of the life cycle is that of the bride's "best man" ("mis̈ō") who is sworn to protect her even against her husband, and who is in a good position to do so as a residential kinsman of the husband. This emphasis on consanguinal ties even after marriage is similar to other parts of the Middle East (footnote 80), and also Africa.

885 A fully adult man ("s̈ew") and woman ("s̈yeẗ") are honorifically addressed, e.g. in church usage, as "aqwā adam" for man (from Geez "Adam"), "aqwā hawan" for woman (from Geez for "Eve"), and the connotation is that they have passed the hot-blooded "gobāz" and "qonjo" stage and have become reasonable, calm, responsible persons who know the etiquette of their culture and have become fully cognizant of proper behavior at all forseeable events in the life cycle.

583 585 A. Marriage Patterns

There are three predominant types of marriage:

Footnote 80: Patqi, Raphael: Relationship Patterns among the Arabs. Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. 2, May 1951, pp. 180-5

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5



covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning adoption.

The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbāt*, or breast-father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbāt*. Used metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show gratitude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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*The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.